

GUIDE

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PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Rev. Edward Malone, M.M.

INSTRUCTING THE CONVERT

Very Rev. Paul R. Coyle, J.C.D.

AS OTHERS SEE US

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Approaches to Christian Unity

Our warmest congratulations to the Society of the Atonement for sponsoring the convention on "Approaches to Christian Unity" at their new seminary in Garrison, N. Y., in May. This gathering of distinguished European and American experts cannot but have enduring and far-reaching consequences for the cause of reunion.

Monsignor Willebrands, Secretary of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, in addition to his superb formal address, clarified many disputed questions. He asserted emphatically that there was no opposition between direct work for converts and ecumenical activity. It is God's will that we strive to win all men to full membership in the Mystical Body. People who are well-disposed toward the Church justify a direct, prudent effort for their conversion.

Many others, however, are sincere Christians who are firmly attached to another religious tradition. Yet many of them are acutely aware of the scandal of disunity. And they pray and labor in the pursuit of the unity for which Christ Himself prayed. Consequently, a devoted, patient, long-range effort must be made by Catholics that "all may be one."

In his view, conflicts will arise only when Catholics manifest an imprudent, ill-advised proselytism in winning converts. Or when Catholic ecumenists are deficient in the knowledge, spirit and qualities indispensable for their delicate tasks.

Father Bernard Leeming, the noted English Jesuit, agreed that convert work and ecumenical activity were both laudable and even essential. He described them as two apostolates that run in parallel lines. The former seeks immediate objectives while the latter pursues a goal that lies in the future.

He warned against expectations of immediate, spectacular results from efforts at reunion. He was hopeful however, regarding the gradual spread of "ecumenical influence." Individuals and groups in all the Christian bodies are promoting religious dialogue and thus demolish walls of ignorance, prejudice and suspicion. This, in God's good time, might ultimately lead to large-scale reunion.

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Proclaiming God's Word

By Rev. Edward Malone, M.M.

One sure way to bring heat into a discussion is to offer some extreme example to prove your side of the argument. Recently in a conversation about the effectiveness of present-day religious education someone told of the following incident.

A young Irish friend, not too long in the country, was waiting for a bus on a dark corner in a large city. As he stood there alone, a wreck of a car pulled up to the curb and two youths got out. They came over to him, and with one brandishing a home-made weapon made of a large nail through the end of a piece of wood, they proceeded to hold him up. When he turned over what he had, about three dollars, they began to threaten him for more. He protested that that was all he had. One of the boys, hearing his rich brogue, said to the other, "Let him go; after all he's a Catholic like us."

Now we can say that an example like this of such a feeble allegiance to Christianity is not a fair example to evaluate the effectiveness of religious education today. It is an extreme case, but it was many of these extreme cases which gave Catholic religious educators reason to pause. When they looked about to improve our catechetical instruction, they were not looking simply for something better, but for something that was vitally necessary. This need explains many of the trends in modern religious education.

If I were to try to characterize the many currents presently at work in religious education, I would sum them all up as a seeking to restore religion as a living experience, to bring modern man to an acceptance of God, a God Who has entered into a dynamic relation with each of us, to lead us to enter into this personal relationship, to stand before God in love and to revel—it is the only word that comes to mind—to revel in the

intimacy of this involvement with God our Father. Now this is more of a description than a definition, but it serves to describe a condition of involvement between God and man, where the divine love, which prompts all God's actions with His creatures, and the human need, which decides man's happiness and contentment, are fulfilled.

It is, I think, this reasonable demand of ours for personal fulfillment which has moved the Church to search into her experience of the centuries and to present anew to us the "Gospel of joy, of good tidings," in order to satisfy the deep need we feel for union with our God. At the same time it was this failure of many to receive the fulfillment and contentment that flow from the Gospel that led many to desert their religion to find their vision of life and satisfaction elsewhere. Not grasping any personal value for religion in their lives, many saw no reason to give their personal adherence to the values proclaimed by religion.

Man did not, however, despair only of religion. The last half century, especially, has seen many disillusioned with ideals of every order. Thinkers of every religious persuasion, or of none, have sought a remedy for this epidemic of frustration, and their answers religious educators have used for the benefit of those who look to religion for a life-giving vision of man in this world.

It is not possible to discuss any at length but I would point out those main currents of thought which influence men concerned with this quest for personal fulfillment.

For several centuries now science has insisted that truth can be found only if the seeker after truth stands off from reality in a spirit of disinterestedness. Only if he is able to stand apart can he subject reality to a critical analysis which alone can discover truth, and for this he must not let any of the observer creep into his undertaking. He must be impersonal. With these theories of knowledge and science only the

observable, the thing that can be measured, can be known with certainty.

Men became proficient in examining the world about them, but at the same time they found themselves becoming more and more separated from the real world. Abstractions, concepts, formulas, these became the sum and measure of knowledge, and logical analysis the sole way to truth. If these things only can be known, then they only can be appreciated. What resulted from this restriction of man's experience to that which could be observed and analyzed? It meant almost a denial that the inner experience of man could lead to truth, a denial of his ability to know by his personal involvement the world of intangibles, of realities outside the world of sense. It was this refusal to recognize and to use the intuitive powers of man, all his powers, that explains his frustration, his desertion of his ideals, his separation from the full world of persons and things. How can we explain a thing like, for example, patriotism, by mathematics?

The world has reacted against this one-sided view of man and of his ability, and so today we have more concern for the philosophies of intuition. We hear of the existentialist quest for meaning, of the value of the person, of the intuitive perception of real but deeper values, of the need for love to complement understanding if we are truly to understand, of personal involvement through activity.

PERSONAL VALUE

The excessive rationalism of the past centuries left its mark in all forms of education, including the religious. So, "religion disappeared as an experience, and with this the fulfillment and personal contentment which should accompany it." Religious education, therefore, has turned again to the personal, the existential and the intuitive as valid and complementary expressions of man's movement to reality, and for us the reality of God. Modern religious education has been characterized by these concerns, and this has brought profound changes in Catholic religious education.

There has been, first of all, a surer grasp of the goal of religious education. I think everyone of us remembers our own catechism classes: the question and answer technique, the need to explain those tongue-twisting words, the detail of theological exactness

with which we touched the lofty doctrines of God. We could very early define the Trinity, defend the visible structure of the Church, and show the reasonableness of indulgences. One thing we can be sure of, we did know our catechism, and a good deal still stays with us.

The emphasis has passed now to a developing of the personal response. Christianity is a message which proclaims the merciful love of the Father for us, who sends His Son, to transform us in the Holy Spirit. Whatever we learn of God and His works, we must see it all within the framework of our personal relation with God. In this way religion remains always a personal response to God in faith, hope and charity, and the catechism answer an explanation of what we know to be our personal experience with God. We do believe in truths, but these truths become the vehicle of God's movement to man, the place where God and man can make their encounter. Each doctrine is presented within the context of divine value.

The personal emphasis has meant a change in what is being taught. This does not mean, of course, that the Church is teaching anything different from what she has taught through the centuries; the same saving Word is being proclaimed. As our emphasis has returned to what has been the Church's own constant concern, the goal of modern catechesis has been more emphatically the personal and complete response in faith. What we can call the "personal elements" of our Faith have reassumed the place given to them in God's revelation.

The personal figure of a loving God looms up in our doctrine to become the center of our teaching. No doctrine or part of a doctrine is considered except with reference to this loving God Who has done all things for our sake. "Christianity is understood as a dialogue in which God summons and man responds, obeys, and freely decides in love and not with intelligence only." And Christ, His Son, becomes the center of our instruction as the fulfillment of God's decision and plan to enter into an intimacy of friendship with mankind, and through whom men are established in unity with God. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to form and remain in His Church, the consummation on earth of His mission of salvation.

This centering of our religious life—and instruction—in God, His Son, and the Holy

Spirit, first encountered as They enter into the history of this world, is, I think, the most significant step forward in Catholic religious education. Or step backward if you will, since we are returning to the emphasis of the Church on her Scripture and Liturgy. It has led us back to the religious meaning of all truths of the faith. If the heart of man yearns for fulfillment, for union with God and his fellow-man, have we not in our Christian revelation a vision of life which satisfies the deepest movements of the human spirit?

RESPONSE FROM STUDENT

The personal character of our religion has made new demands also upon the student of religion. Let us call it the existential element of religious education: the need to get involved with the reality of God, made known by His revelation of Himself. His cannot be the disinterested standing apart, to observe and analyze and restate the body of Christian truth in clear but personally undemanding terms. In the presence of God Who reveals Himself out of love of man, Whose workings in His creation are known, Who sends His Christ, the student must do more than accept the truth of these events. He must love. And so our catechisms today insist upon this personal response, preparing for it by drawing out and explaining the divine Reality made known by the Gospel. God is seen to attract the heart. In our love we must do, and in our doing we must go out to God, to Christ and His Church, to all men in every circumstance of life. The Christian life is not simply an obedience to an arbitrary set of laws and rules, but flows necessarily from the Christian's involvement with God, a divinely-provided means to deepen his intimacy with God and his fellow men. No lesson is complete, until the student experiences the reality of love, of understanding and of compassion.

With all that our religious instruction seeks to do in the power of the Holy Spirit, more than the passing on of truths about God, educators have looked for new and effective ways of teaching. This was the first major concern in catechetics, a reaction against the excessive intellectualism of the times. If the personal values of religion are to be grasped and assimilated, there must be an appeal to the whole man, to his intellect and to his heart, that inner faculty

which man has to connect himself with the world of intangibles, with those things which do not fall under the senses. Let us call this the intuitive element. If we are to change our outlook, so that we accept God for the first time, or deepen our commitment of self, we must go beyond lectures, and ideas, and concepts. We need to be led to experience personally the divine Reality. We are moved by the concrete example; we can identify ourselves, not with the abstract but with the singular, the life situation. So we see the concern of educators to find a method of teaching religion which makes use of the psychological laws of learning, in order to bring into play the personal experience of the student, in order to help him enter into the reality about which he is being taught. The introductory story, the examples taken from life, activity which is practical and meaningful for each student, all of these use the student's tremendous potential for personal involvement.

It is for the same reason that Sacred Scripture holds such an important place in religious education. It is, of course, first of all the inspired word of God which brings the power of God into our lives. There is, moreover, in Sacred Scripture a power of teaching to bring the living Christ before our eyes, to touch our hearts. The narratives of Our Lord's life, the simple lines of His preaching in words and deeds, the parables which summon up images familiar to our own experience, all speak directly to the heart.

LITURGY TEACHES

The liturgy of the Church through its feasts and celebrations continues this presentation of the living Jesus. It provides still more through the personal participation of the student a way for him to step immediately toward the Jesus Who is being proclaimed. More and more our catechisms link each lesson, not only with the moral life of the Christian, but also with the common liturgical experiences of his worship, to connect what he believes with what he is taught, with what he does every day of his life. In the sign of the Cross, for example, he professes his devotion of the Blessed Trinity; in his communion at Mass he joins himself with God in and through Christ, his brother.

May I say that in our catechetical work today there is no less emphasis upon actual knowledge of divine revelation because we stress our personal response to God's saving act in our lives. According to the age level we need logical analysis and precise statement of belief. But as we learn more of God, as we see His working out of man's salvation, all our knowledge prepares the way for our loving submission to God. Without this knowledge our religion faces the danger of becoming a body of mere impressions, where we are carried here and there by the emotion of the moment.

There is one last effect of this new and yet old approach to religious education, and that is the demand it makes of the teacher of religion. He takes upon himself not simply to see to it that his students are able to recite the answers of the catechism, or even to understand all the words he uses. He must present in his teaching the Person of God; he is to communicate the love of God, to make it present in our midst and in some manner tangible by all. In the

teacher we find a mediator where God and man can meet. Surely he begins to understand a little Our Lord's words, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," and, "he who hears you, hears Me." He does not go forth to conquer the adversary. While he is convinced and dedicated to God's Word in the Church, he seeks to lead to the love of God, not to win an argument.

A great deal is going on in religious education: the goal of personal commitment to God in Christ, the demand of personal response in faith and charity, each doctrine reinforcing for us God's love for mankind, the appeal of God to the heart of the student, the sense of personal mission, all bear witness to the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit, stirring up the waters of complacency, leading on to greater service of the Lord.

Our prayer is that some day we may look out upon the world, upon each other, and in proclaiming our union in Christian faith, we may in truth be joined in love with Our Father in heaven and with each other.

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Instructing the Convert

By Very Rev. Paul R. Coyle, J.C.D.

Adults who are obligated by divine law to receive baptism cannot licitly receive the sacrament unless they have, besides the intention necessary for the valid reception of baptism, the necessary dispositions and preparation which are required by the very nature of the sacrament and the law of the Church. Hence, before all else the convert must receive due instruction.

The amount of instruction and the period of time to be consumed in imparting the instruction are not determined by the Code. Of necessity these elements depend on the capacities of the individual and on other circumstances. In an instruction to the Vicar Apostolic of China, the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith declared that the time and the curriculum of the

catechumenate were to be determined by the prudent judgment of the Vicar Apostolic, but the period of instruction should not be extensively prolonged in the case of old people, of the infirm, of those who showed extraordinary signs of conversion, or of those who gave an outstanding example of fortitude in time of persecution. The Holy Office also decided that the time of the catechumenate depended on the ability of the convert to assimilate the necessary truths.

Individual bishops may, however, decide the length of time for ordinary cases by diocesan statute. In the absence of any diocesan regulation, the pastor or priest in charge may decide on the necessary period of time, according to the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith.

The instructions should be given with as much dispatch and thoroughness as possible, but unless there are present some specific

urgent reasons, baptism should not be administered before the course of instruction is completed. Though no definite amount of instruction has been specifically established for all cases by the Church, one can arrive at some practical conclusions from the common belief and practice of the Church. In general, a complete course in Catholic doctrine should be explained. To this end detailed instructions on the articles contained in the Profession of Faith could be given. If this is not possible, the convert should be taught the basic truths of faith and be made to promise to continue further instruction after baptism.

For the unbaptized convert, an act of faith is indispensable as a necessary means, before he can be justified by baptism. The Council of Trent in defending and explaining the Catholic concept of justification, asserted: "Faith is the beginning of man's salvation, the foundation and root of all justification." As a general rule, then, one may argue that the catechumen should know and believe *fide divina et catholica* all the essential truths which are contained in the Scriptures and in Tradition as proposed by the Church, either in solemn judgment or by the ordinary and universal magisterium, to be believed as divinely revealed. To deny or even doubt any of these truths would be to lapse into heresy.

It is not necessary, though certainly it is desirable, that the convert know and believe all these revealed truths explicitly. Substantially it suffices that all of them are believed implicitly. In the determination of the degree of explicit faith which is required, it is necessary to distinguish between those truths which must be believed *necessitate medii* and those concerning which belief is necessary *necessitate praecepti*. The unanimous consent of theologians, confirmed by ecclesiastical decisions, affirms that every convert, however illiterate he may be, must

as a necessary means believe explicitly, and with an understanding of the terms in which they are expressed, at least two truths: the existence of God and His remunerative justice.

Whether explicit belief in the Holy Trinity and in the mystery of the Incarnation is also absolutely necessary as a means of justification is still a matter of controversy among theologians. The majority opinion denies the necessity for explicit belief. The opposing view seems more probable, however, and since there is question of a means to eternal life, the *pars tutior* must be followed in practice.

This conclusion is supported by two responses of the Holy Office. This Supreme Congregation was asked whether the minister is obliged to explain all the mysteries of faith before he confers baptism on an adult, especially if he is near death, when such an explanation would disturb his peace of mind, or whether it suffices if the adult promises that, when he has recovered from his illness, he shall take instructions and practice faithfully what is demanded of him.

To this the Holy Office replied that a mere promise did not suffice, but that the missionary was obliged to explain to the adult convert—even if he was near death—as long as he was not wholly incapable of comprehension, the mysteries of faith regarding which knowledge was indispensable as a means of salvation, as are especially the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

A few months later the Holy Office insisted that one who does not explicitly believe in Jesus Christ cannot be permitted to receive baptism. It is important to note that the obligation on the one imparting the instructions is not merely to propose these four necessary truths, but to explain them, so that the convert can be said to understand the essence of these mysteries. (Goodwine, "Reception of Converts.")

Cardinal Cushing Warns: "This age has been called 'the century of the common man.' It cannot be that. Common sanctity, average piety, routine religious interests are no longer enough in the laity. We need uncommon sanctity, extraordinary piety, heroic devotion to Christ and His Church if Christian civilization is to survive."

As Others See Us

I. TWO IMAGES

There's a lady in our neighborhood who walks with a firm step, with head erect and with squared shoulders. She seldom speaks to her neighbors. Her severe, well-tailored but well-worn suits, her few but obviously real jewels indicate wealth, past or present.

She responds to greetings with icy correctness, and never lingers. She never sits on her stoop, or leans over her back fence. If her assistance is required, she gives it grudgingly, never with largesse. If she voices an opinion on the community, it is always in favor of a repressive, joyless morality.

Her neighbors fear her. They accuse her of being cold and impersonal; it would shock them to hear that she loves them.

Unaware of what happens behind her tightly closed shutters, they fear her evil schemes. Unable to read her thoughts, they suspect she may be plotting against them.

Her neighbors think she is crazy. Old fashioned in her habits, distracted in her preoccupations, she appears to be permanently behind the times.

When the neighborhood is excited about the latest fad, she presses discussion on some archaic, long-abandoned principle. In an era of liberation and freedom, she shudders at license; in an era of experimentation she trods down well-worn paths.

But she has been known to do an about face with startling rapidity. She is maddeningly slow in grasping a problem, and even more maddening in some of the solutions she offers. Her persistence, often confused with bull-headedness, wins grudging admiration.

To her own children and friends she appears quite differently. On her squared shoulders are generations of gentility, and beneath her curt hello there is an ardent desire to stop and chat. But since she was a rejected immigrant, she is afraid now.

Within her house, so severe on the outside, there is mirth and warmth, and a great deal of love. Her bric-a-brac makes her younger children smile; her quaint manners

at tea evoke the memory of more leisurely times. Above all, her wisdom and insight and sense of proportion are in evidence whenever she speaks in her own home. Those cold eyes can sparkle with wit, can brim with tears, can shine with love.

Probably her most endearing charm is the gentle humor with which she laughs at her own foibles. Her heritage of ancient breeding is no burden, but is a grace worn with puzzling casualness.

Her children find her house a veritable treasure trove. Togas hang beside hose and ruffled collars; many dusty old tomes tend to obscure a small but fine collection of the latest physics books; mawkish ballads play at counterpoint with sonorous masterpieces.

They find in her a balance and a patience which can come only with age, and a clear grasp of essentials which belies her quivering hands and her quavering voice.

When they are troubled they find her compassion limitless, and when they offend they find she forgives willingly.

While she is vigorous in her demands and absolute in the goals she sets, she is always at hand to aid in their fulfillment.

This lady is our Holy Mother, the Church. This is the way she appears to our neighbors—this is the way we know her to be.

When will we Catholics introduce her to our neighbors?

II. BALANCE

Our neighbors have a weird idea about the Church, not because they are malicious, or even because they are blind, but because we fail to show her to them in all her splendor. Look at what the words "birth control" do to them. They think that a group of foreign, unmarried clerics put their heads together, mumble about some long lost moral principle and come up with a heartless, unrealistic moral judgment. Then they impose it on a herd of docile laymen, and cruelly leave them to struggle in futility against this unlivable ethic. Our neighbors see tyranny coupled with cowardice.

We, on the other hand, know that in listening to the Church we are not listening to men, but to God. We know that in living this austere morality we are not left to our

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own weak resources, but rather that we have the very strength of God to assist us.

If we are to avoid misunderstandings we must make an effort to present any aspect of the Church or her teaching in a balanced framework which will assure a faithful image of her. In this problem of birth control, we should not speak merely of a dictate of the Natural Law, but rather of the Church as God's own teaching instrument. We are not fools who would submit ourselves to any mind less than the mind of God. We are not cowards who abdicate responsibility, but rather free men who willingly submit ourselves to God, Who alone is worthy of our allegiance.

We are most grateful that God has chosen to use an instrument for teaching. We do thank Him for not leaving us alone as orphans in the face of the tempests of this world. We are realists who have a humble appreciation of our almost infinite capacity for self deception, and so we freely accept His judgment, as expressed through His teaching device. If we are merely listening to men we are indeed the most pitiable of men, but if we are listening to God, then indeed we are the most blessed of men, because in the midst of such darkness, we know where we are going.

But even more important for a balanced presentation of the Church is the fact that within the Church we receive not only God's teachings and God's judgment, but also God's strength and God's life. The treasure of the Church is the Divine Life of Grace, and Her most precious possessions are the Sacraments, through which that Divine Life is channeled to each of us. To live God's judgment on birth control is no easier than to turn the other cheek or to walk the second mile, and yet in all of these demands of a most practical Faith, we do not rely on our own power, but rather we rely on God's assistance.

When He Baptized us, Christ gave us His own life, grafted us onto His own Body, made us members of Himself. When Christ confirmed us, He gave us His own Spirit to be our mainstay. When Christ forgives our daily and weekly sins in Confession, He, not we, wipes the slate clean, gives us the Divine life again and enables us to keep up the struggle. When He feeds us on His own Body and Blood, He is the food of the hungry, the strength of the weak and the medicine of the sick.

When Christ binds this husband to this wife, He binds them together, not merely in a contract marriage, but in the sacrament of Matrimony, so that His divine Love is their Bond, His power is theirs to withstand the onslaughts of ancient or neo-paganism. Reborn, matured, cleansed, fed and married by Christ we become capable of the highest moral ideas. All of this is given by the same Church which takes such a strong position on the birth control problem. If we never say all of this, can we be amazed that our neighbors pity us?

One word of caution must be made. Since ours is a response of Faith, we would be guilty of rash judgment if we were to impute immorality to those who are not graced by this Faith, but relying merely on human wisdom have arrived at another answer to the vexing problems of birth control.

III. COMMUNITY CONCERN

Our neighbors are confused by a contradiction. We boast of the name Catholic, yet we are amazingly parochial. We claim universality, and yet, in day to day concerns we are quite exclusive. Our works of mercy are valued by the community at large, yet we are often blind to the needs of the community. With the possible exceptions of Communism and smut, we are little interested in those problems which beset our City and our World.

Let the whole community act on a problem like Police-Community relations, and only one Catholic organization shows up. If the community is discussing the problems of the Welfare Department, our sodalities are absorbed in the minutiae of their own organization. If the city is puzzling over tax sources, our Holy Name Societies are busy with the Colts or the Birds. Our indignation rises and is vocal at any sign of birth control, but we are smugly uninterested when others, motivated by moral concern, seek to ban the sale of beer from the stands of the stadium.

At a time when the sap is dying in the roots of our democracy, how many Catholic groups would even think of working for voter registration? Is the sole purpose of our alumni associations to serve as springboards for aspiring alumni?

Even our self interest is pitiable. A glaring case at point is urban renewal. This multi-million dollar project for rebuilding

the City effects thirty-three of the sixty-four parishes within the city limits. How many are even aware of it?

All of this narrow-minded lack of concern for anyone but ourselves strikes our neighbors as scandalous. Those who don't know us at all are untouched. "After all, what else can you expect from Catholics," seems to sum up their attitudes. But those who know something of the social doctrine of the Church, who know something of Catholic activities in other countries, who have worked with the few co-operative Catholics, are hurt and puzzled. "This is what you preach, but look at what you are," seems to be their remark.

In simple honesty and with an effort at humility, we must admit that the accusation of self-centered parochialism is true. How did we arrive at this position, in which we have sold our birthright of universal concern and interest for the porridge of selfishness? Most of the cause of our failure goes back to a garden and to a boat.

The garden is that of Eden with its Fall. This we share with all men. The boat we share with all Americans; we are immigrants. Our response to the boat is different from that of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, because our reception on the docks was different. Doubly foreign because of language and religion, we were rejected, scorned and discriminated against. We responded by withdrawing. We built a self-sufficient ghetto and were quite content to remain there. In reality the walls have crumbled, the gate is open, but still we huddle together, with eyes tightly shut and ears charmed by the murmur of our own laments.

Some oldsters may still need the crutch of an "us and them" mentality, but for anyone who has been here for even three generations there should be a search for the "We" of "We, the people." Defense by the unattacked is absurd.

Our heritage as Catholics is breadth of vision, large heartedness and open welcome to everything and everybody. When we live this Catholic attitude, our neighbors will see it, and one more misconception will fall by the wayside.

IV. ONE CHURCH

"There is only one Church of Christ. And we are it."

This is a simple statement of an essential

Catholic dogma. But its effect on our neighbors is devastating. These eleven words trigger a mirage of sounds, sights, and emotions. Visions of stolid, somber, unblinking Dominicans blessing the headsman's axe; sly, snide Jesuits sneaking behind thrones; nasty little girls taunting other little girls; ghetto dwellers consoling themselves with this bit of smug cant; Irish glee at Yankee shock.

Is it possible for us to be witnesses to this essential truth without being offensive? Yes, if we are humble enough in our acceptance and our profession of it. The offense is caused, not by the truth, but by our use of it.

One God. This is the heart of God's message to Israel. One Christ, the sole mediator between God and man. This is the good news of the New Testament. Before these truths it is easy to be humble. Gratitude, real religious reverence enter into our response to them. And besides in the West, all the other gods are dead, so there is no temptation to petty pride and to the competitive spirit of the ball park.

One Church. And by this we mean one body, made up of Christ as head and ourselves as members. Christ is God plus man. The Church is Christ plus us, and this is the source of our perversion of the truth. Once we introduce ourselves into the definition of the Church, and we must if we are to be faithful to the New Testament, we can open the door to arrogance, contempt and smug revenge. And it is this alien element which is immediately recognized and resented by those who suffer the exclusion which it engenders.

The secret of authentic witness lies in witnessing to Christ, not to ourselves. We must consider always, and speak of Christ's function as teacher, Christ's work of salvation, Christ's role a law-giver, Christ's action in making men holy. In reality, Christ is primary, and thus He must be first in mind, first on the tongue and first in consideration.

We, His members, instruments in His hands, docile to His ministrations, receiving of His bounty, are secondary.

Since this is the reality behind the dogma, all we have to do is to really accept it, and then live it. If we are Christ-centered and not self-centered our neighbors will be able to listen to us without fear.

In becoming a Man, God took up the limitations of a man. Christ, the God-man, lived in one place, in one time, in one neigh-

borhood. And yet His work was universal. That He was a Jew must have scandalized the Greeks. That He was a carpenter must have scandalized the petty temple officials. His mountain accent offended the city dweller. And yet Incarnation demands this limitation, without being frustrated by it. When God mixes in humanity, He is bound to produce mysteries.

Since the Church is the Incarnation spread abroad in time and space, she will also have Her own particular marks and these can offend. But are we fair when we ask Her to carry the burden of our snobbery? We have no license to offend. We are not permitted to build stumbling blocks.

The fact that we have been called into this Body of Christ means that we must do His work, we must be as open to His use as were His own eyes and hands. The mystery of God's choice of instruments is deep enough without our clouding it any further by our pride. We rejoice, but we do not boast. We accept, but only to share. We look up to God with gratitude, not down on our neighbors with contempt.

V. A MONOLITH

A shaft of marble, strong and serene, unseamed and without parts, the same on all four sides, the same above as below—this is a monolith.

Some people envision the Church in this manner. They think of her as a solid phalanx with one mind, one will, one heart and one uniform reflex action to any situation. A bureaucrat in Rome sneezes and four hundred million handkerchiefs come out. A whim passes through the Papal mind, and four hundred million Catholics bow down. The episcopal knee is hit, and the entire Diocese jumps. The pastor is hurt and the whole parish winces. Insecure people, with an innate taste for totalitarianism, look with envy on this monolith. Mature persons, jealous of human freedom, are appalled by it. Both are wrong. The reality of the Church is much more complex and fascinating.

The mystery of Unity in Catholicity produces a tension in which a spectacular variety is held in a dynamic balance. Variety of national groups, ethnic experiences, cultural patterns, political viewpoints, theological climates, emotional needs; all of these make up the warp and woof of the seamless

but not colorless garment of Christ which is His Church.

This becomes obvious at Mission exhibits, international study weeks and to any student of history. It will be one of the brightest signs at the forthcoming Ecumenical Council. But it can be obscured on the local and national scene.

A defense mentality calls for closed ranks. Danger demands a united front. The reaction of the Counter-reform produced such a search for uniformity. Our immigrant history called forth this response. And we have paid the price of sustained rigidity; impeded growth, stifled development, and near sclerosis. But this was a mere moment in history. At last we are entering a period of renewal. A strong man, secure in his self possession is free to relax, to expand and to take the risks of development. This is our current position, and it should form our present posture.

In point of fact the American church has a fascinating variety of differences. The prolonged liberal-conservative debate, while it may not be too faithful to Robert's Rules of Order, has produced a fair number of hotly debated issues. The UN, the approach to communism, the emphasis to be placed on integration, the question of the vernacular in the liturgy, the inclusion of "supply and demand" within the Natural Law, the meaning of racketeering within the labor movement, the right to work laws.

Each of these issues will find a variety of interpretations. Some of the interpreters may want to read their opponents out of the Church, but as yet there have been no real excommunications. While the total span of the Catholic press mirrors this diversity, individual papers help to perpetuate the attitude of a past generation. After good cartoons, probably the most pressing need of the Catholic press is an articulate controversy.

In the intellectual life the Church has her various schools of theology, philosophy and law. In economics and sociology she has various groups. In spirituality she has diverse disciplines. In any vital field we find the same thing, a multitude of tendencies, emphases, and expressions. And this is only as it should be. For after sixteen hundred years we still honor and should live by St. Augustine's famous remark: "In essential things, unity; in other things, liberty; in all things, charity."

VI. CHURCH AND STATE

Other Americans have a certain fear of the Church. It is not clearly defined, yet this very haziness makes it all the more real. When they sense the Church as a danger to those essentials of our American political and constitutional heritage, this fear becomes particularly acute. It is crystallized by the term, "Separation of Church and State." It becomes vocal at the mention of a Catholic for president.

If we respond to this fear with cries of bigotry or try to point to Ireland and other countries, we are merely being superficial. If, instead, we have recourse to some of the principles which have been discussed in this series, it is possible that we can bring some assurance to our neighbors.

We spoke about balance. If we discuss the Church-State problem in a balanced historical perspective we can show the impossibility of any universally binding Catholic solution. Since both the Church and the State are involved in the historical process, the relation of the Church to the constantly changing state will differ from one set of circumstances to another. Unchanging principles come alive only in the midst of a variety of facts, and thus they will command differing practical courses.

Imperial Rome, in which the state was a god; the Christian Empire after Constantine, in which the state tried to use the church; the middle ages with its highly developed co-operation, and the danger of absorbing the state into the church; the Reformation State with its union of throne and altar; the modern Lay State, which is disengaged from religion; the Post Modern State which once again seeks a pagan divinity. All of these are different types of states. The Church has relations with each of them. None of them can claim any canonization from the Catholic conscience.

Spain is not the United States. The relations between the Church and the Spanish state will be different from the relations between the Church and the American state.

We pointed out previously that within the ample span of the Church there is room for variety in thought and action, as long as basic principles are maintained. The

Church is not a monolith. This is particularly true in the field of Church-State relations.

It is a fact that there is an opinion within the Church, based on the facts of Spain, Italy and France, which seeks the solution to the tensions of a Church-State relation by a union of Church and State. It is true that this opinion has for a long time been a majority opinion. It is also true that this opinion has had strong Papal support.

But it is equally true that for over one hundred years there has been a minority opinion within the Church which maintains that there is a valid sense in which the Church can be separate from the state. Based on the facts of some of the modern states, rooted in the Anglo-Saxon traditions of democracy, this opinion has received increasing support. Cardinals and bishops, theologians and philosophers, lawyers and practicing politicians, in Europe and America, have maintained that this opinion is acceptable to the Catholic conscience. No one has been condemned nor excommunicated for holding this minority opinion.

In the realm of practical action it is safe to assert that American Catholics, laity and clergy, act in the light of this opinion. Catholic citizens taking the oath of office, in the military, in the Federal government, even in the Presidency, if such should ever be the case, see no conflict between their conscience and the American constitution.

The serenity with which they live their commitment as Catholics and as Americans needs no bolstering. But perhaps our neighbors could use the assurances of some official pronouncement. May we not hope that after the noise of the conventions and elections has died our bishops will make such an assuring statement? As in the case of statements, of other years, the united voice of the American Hierarchy, merely repeating the utterances of individual bishops, could allay the fears of our neighbors.

On our own level, neighbor to neighbor, the rest of us in the Church have a job to do. In our conversations we must try to introduce a bit of calm history into the discussion. In the living of our civic responsibility, we must witness to the sincerity with which we accept the Constitution.

Guide Lights

THE MAJORITY MINORITY . . .

The Official Catholic Directory for 1961 reports that there are now 42,104,900 Catholics in the 50 states. This represents an increase of 1,233,598 over last year and a 10 year increase of 13,470,022. Percentage-wise this is a 47.04 increase in the ten year period. The Directory recorded 136,953 converts. This is 14,571 fewer than last year. However, it marks the eighth consecutive year that the number has exceeded 125,000. And it brings the total for ten years to 1,343,377.

CARDINAL BEA . . .

The Operation Understanding edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* for May 14th has a translation of an article written by Cardinal Bea for *Civiltà Cattolica*. Cardinal Bea is chairman of the Vatican Ecumenical Council's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. The article concerns the right attitude toward the Separated Brothers. The Cardinal writes that there seems to be two opposed attitudes in existence.

"The first is adopted by those people who attach importance to the fact that separated Christians adhere either to a doctrine or to a doctrinal system which the Catholic Church has declared to be heretical, or else, to a schismatic church which refuses obedience to the Roman Pontiff as the visible head of the entire Church of Christ."

The other position is "the opinion that one must be open to all: one must seek to understand and recognize that which is true and good in the position of others, considering above all their real intentions and realizing one's own shortcomings. One must seek to learn from them, to enrich one's position with the riches which are found also in other confessions."

The Cardinal finds both of these attitudes exaggerated. He says, however, that they are not really diametrically opposed. "They are two different expressions of a single charity, which at times can apply severity, and at others gentleness; yet they both have charity as their root, and they spring from it."

Cardinal Bea's analysis of authentic charity and the conclusions he draws from it concerning the Separated Brethren and Catholic Ecumenism form important reading for all who are concerned with unity.

FATHER WEIGEL . . .

Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., speaking at a convocation at John Carroll University, was not placing himself in one of the exaggerated positions referred to by the Cardinal, but he did urge Catholics to be fearless of the word "compromise." He explained that while Catholics must stand pat on dogma and doctrine, they need not fear to look for things on which they agree with Protestants. He said that talking about the things of men and speaking man-to-man we are free to haggle. "But man to God is another thing. We are not free to bargain. Compromise is out."

Father Weigel also noted that the main stumbling block to unity is that "Protestant churches have a dreadful fear of authority," such as exists in the Catholic Church. "And it will do Catholics no good to plead 'please come back, come home to your Father's house.' The reaction of the non-Catholics is to answer—'You come home and join us in progress, we are not going back.'" Because of that feeling, said the Jesuit theologian, "neither you nor I will live to see unity through conversion."

FATHER DUFF . . .

In Oklahoma City another Jesuit echoed something of Father Weigel's view on unity. Father Edward Duff, S.J., author of "Social Thought of the World Council of Churches," stated that the ecumenical movement by Protestant church bodies still holds little hope for formal unity with the Catholic Church.

Yet, while admitting that Catholic-Protestant unity prospects "seem so very dim that they are trying to eager souls," Father Duff nevertheless encouraged conversation and dialogue at all levels as an effort that might one day lead all men to one Church. He said that Protestant ecumenism and Catholic hopes are furthered because churchmen recognize that "division represents a scandal—and even a sin—since Christ said that he wanted unity . . . that he established one church."

BISHOP WRIGHT . . .

Some months ago the Most Rev. John J. Wright gave an excellent talk in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, on this same

subject of unity. Like Father Duff he saw some encouraging signs in the present climate. He pointed out, however, that prayer is a necessary dimension in the move toward unity.

"The unity of all Christians," he said, "in the one true Faith and in the Church can never come to pass through discussion or 'dialogue' alone. Discussions of theology and the 'dialogue' incidental to it will become a mere intellectual parlor game, the most fascinating but also the most fruitless of diversions, unless the intellectual exchange is only part of the picture, indeed a less important part. Dominating all must be prayer, prayer and the searching of the heart which should be a part of all prayer, to the end that the wills of men may be in perfect conformity with the will of Christ.

The obstacles to the fulfillment of the prayers of Christ for the unity of all Christians in one true Faith and in the Church are by no means exclusively, nor even predominantly intellectual. They are more often spiritual, moral, emotional, sometimes even temperamental. They are not so much logical difficulties as psychological blocks, at least in the case of millions in our so subjective civilization. Such obstacles will not be overcome by reasoning and disputation so much as by prayer and fasting, by penitential discipline of the spirit and humble purging of the heart that Christ may be all and in all."

DR. MAX LACKMANN . . .

The Rev. Dr. Lackmann, a Lutheran minister, is the President of the League for Reunion of Protestants and Catholics in Germany. Dr. Lackmann founded the League last July. It has its roots in Die Sammlung (The Gathering). This is a small but influential Christian unity movement which began in 1955 under the Rev. Hans Asmussen, former provost of the Lutheran Cathedral at Kiel.

Dr. Lackmann says of his league that it has "no intention of setting itself up as a new church. It seeks to initiate a movement within, not outside, Evangelical Christianity, with the aim of taking an active part in preparing for reunification." "The work we are going to do, in the first place, is not a work for our community, the league; we want on the contrary to be something of a focal point for Evangelical Christians whose intention is to belong to the one Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are not a club of discontented people, but conceive our task as that of servants for Evangelical Christianity and for the Roman Catholic Church."

The League has issued an eight page pamphlet setting forth its position and program,

which includes the establishment of small cells of members both in Germany and abroad. In January it began publication of a quarterly magazine called *Bausteine*. Its first issue includes articles on how the true and good elements in Lutheran worship could be incorporated into the Catholic liturgy.

MOTHERS MARTYRIA AND BASILEA . . .

In 1947 two Lutheran ladies, Dr. Klara Schlink and Erika Madauss founded the Ecumenical Sisters of Mary. Dr. Schlink took the name of Mother Basilea and Erika Madauss that of Mother Martyria. They established themselves in Darmstadt. On July 26th they are sponsoring a week long pilgrimage to a Catholic sanctuary in Switzerland, the hermitage of St. Nicholas. The pilgrimage is predominantly for laymen and laywomen.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH . . .

The Pastoral Institute for advanced study of Contemporary Parish Problems will be held at Conception Seminary, Conception, Missouri, from June 19th to August 12th. This institute is open to priests and clerics in major orders. Any number of two week periods may be attended. Lectures will be given in Pastoral Liturgy, Catechetics, Apologetics, Lay Apostolate and Counseling.

The Summer Biblical Institute for Priests will be held the weeks of July 3rd to 7th and 10th to 14th at Maryknoll Seminary, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. A new faculty and a new set of courses offers priests another opportunity to come abreast of contemporary biblical scholarship.

The Midwestern Institute of Pastoral Theology will be held in Detroit, August 27-30. For priests and theology students of the Midwestern States and Ontario, the Institute will provide intensive studies in the field of catechetics. Speakers include Fr. Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore; Fr. Bernard Cooke, S.J., head of the Theology Department of Marquette University; Msgr. John B. McDowell, Superintendent of Schools for the diocese of Pittsburgh. Information and schedule from Registrar, Midwestern Institute of Pastoral Theology, 2701 W. Chicago Blvd., Detroit 6.

The Third National Conference on Convert Work will be held at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, New York, June 27th to June 29th. There will be a series of talks and discussions on techniques. These have been arranged to provide for priests who are relatively new in convert work and for those of wider experience.

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